

# Socio-cultural Challenges Faced by Women in Patricentric society

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## ABSTRACT:

*Despite the fact that our constitution guarantees equality before the laws, we still have strong gender-bias and gender inequality. The social system is based on hierarchy, where the male dominates and curtails women's freedom. Women are made to feel inferior from the moment they are born. Right from their childhood, they have occupied a secondary place in the family. They have been told to be obedient, unquestioning, meek and submissive. They are made to accept everything, even defeat, gracefully. After marriage, they are expected to adjust with the changing family ways and surroundings. They have to live miserable and pathetic lives and remain unsuccessful to fulfill their personal desires. Thus, women strive hard for equal status and freedom throughout their whole life. The present paper is an attempt to study the types of gender oppression and the socio-cultural challenges faced by women, whether married or unmarried, in patricentric society. The female psyche is constantly tormented by the social mind. The paper is a critical analysis of many ugly practices prevalent in Indian society with regards to gender oppression. The paper will also throw light on the means to overcome this malicious circle of existence.*

**KEYWORDS:** secondary place, gender oppression, socio-cultural challenges, patricentric society.

## INTRODUCTION:

“Life is a challenge, It has to be met”. The saying is far more true in the case of a woman. For a woman life is always a challenge and since ages she has been subjected to the many challenges thrown by society, customs, traditions and men. Tradition, the world over, has assigned a lover and subordinate position to women in its social set up.

### Sasibala

“The emotional, sexual and psychological stereotyping of

females begins when the doctor says, It's a girl”.

### Shirley Chisholm

There are strict rules and regulations in the country to prevent violence against women, but due to their lack of effective implementation, the violence is not stopping. Stereotyping of women begins right from the moment of their birth. They are made to feel inferior from their childhood because the Indian society believes that the men have the power and cultural dominance in the society. They are marginalized through cultural institutions and religious rituals.

Though, Women are educated today but they are still under the impact of traditional values, are not able to rise above them. Even when they want to raise their voice against the unjust social system, their voices have been crushed by the patricentric society because women are treated as one of their possessions. Right from their birth, they have occupied a secondary place in the family. They have been told to be obedient, unquestioning, meek and submissive. They have to accept everything, even defeat, gracefully in the patriarchal society.

In India almost 75 percent of women face a variety of problems in society. They are increasingly subjected to harsh behaviour not only at home but in society also. Gender inequality still exists in other sectors also like educational, socio-political and economical. Socially women's voices have become crushed, the term silence is a part of the constitution of female identity that subjectivity is a crucial factor to women. As Sophocles says, "Silence gives the proper grace to women".

Patriarchal concepts can be found not only in the social, legal, political and economic organization of all nations but also in literary works. There has already been a lot of research done on women's issues. In the light of Patriarchy, Indian Writing in English plays an important role. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Toru Dutt, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and many others are among the Indian authors who have written in English.

At present time most of the females are hypersensitive, isolated, helpless and tormented by the male dominating society. We can even see the yearnings of

the Indian women for self liberation and self dignity. They are compelled to live according to the traditional roles assigned for women. The research aims to analyse types of gender oppression and socio-cultural challenges faced by women in patriarchal society.

### **Socio-cultural Challenges Faced by Women in patricentric society**

The status of women in Indian society has been changing with the course of time. They have to face many socio-cultural challenges, such as:

#### **Violence, Abusement and Insecurities**

Because of the dowry system in our society, domestic violence is more common. Dowry death and bride burning are one of the significant issues in India. They are subjected to exploitation, abuse and harassment not only at home, workplace but in society also. Acid cases are continuously being committed in India.

#### **Unequal pay**

One of the major problems faced by the females is of Poor economic conditions. They are provided an unequal pay for the same job as men.

#### **Misunderstandment and longing of love**

They are often Misunderstood not by their husbands, parents, children, but by their family members also. They suffered from a longing of love and understanding from their parents, especially from their husbands.

#### **Ill health**

Females are given low nutrition foods in comparison to male. They have little control over their reproductive health. Another health issues faced by the women in the patriarchal society are- female foetus, low immunization.

#### **Alienation**

Sense of distance and alienation from her family members are faced by the females in the society.

#### **Body objectification**

In society too much emphasis is given on their looks and colour. Their judgement is based on their appearance.

#### **Feeling of inadequacy in educated women**

Some families allow their females to seek education and employment both, while some have limited their girls to education only.

#### **Problem Faced by Career-oriented Woman**

Promilla Kapor found in her study that though the majority of the husbands wanted their wives to work mainly for financial gain to the family, they were not prepared to share in household responsibilities and in looking after the children's family.

#### **Conscious Modernity and unconscious tradition**

The modern educated woman is caught in the horns of a dilemma. One hand she finds herself caught in the chain of old values and conventions and on the other side the influence of education and modern culture weakened their faith in the old tradition.

#### **Stereotypes thinking**

Our society describes the quality of women as ideally sympathetic, gentle, warm, passive and dependent. They are always expected to be kind and nice.

#### **Restriction of married women**

Patriarchy restricts females individuality and binds her within the ritual of an ideal wife and homemaker.

#### **Marriage as the traditional bond**

In a society dominated by men, marriage can be seen as a traditional bond, which has been arranged on the basis of property and money which sometimes ended in failure.

#### **The oppressive domestic environment**

The lives of women are full of trivialities, with lack of

communication, mental isolation and physical solitude. They are treated like cage birds and the idea of freedom is out of their understanding of these women.

#### **A longing for love and understanding especially from husband**

They are totally devoted towards their husband's family but they are often misunderstood. They long for love, especially from their husband.

#### **Humiliation of a childless lady**

It can be seen how women in Indian society are under a lot of pressure to bear children. The humiliation and harassment of barren ladies in the traditional Indian society are well known. Sometimes they are treated like damaged goods to be sent back to their family.

#### **The victim of old tradition**

They are regarded as subservient in the eyes of their family members. Their relationship with their mother-in-laws is an invalid sense of duty, of honour, of concern. The relationship with their husbands is filled with loneliness and a desperate urge. The family restricts them within the ritual of an ideal wife.

#### **Injured self-esteem and mental agony**

In the new family no one is there to console their depressed mind. There is a total lack of sympathy by their-in-laws. They are alienated in a joint family, whose heart is always in thirst for love.

#### **Mean existence**

There is no purpose in the lives of these women. As there is no escape from the miserable lives, sometimes they commit suicide to bring out themselves from silent suffering.

Thus, they live in a society where no rooms are made for women's sensibility and individuality. They are considered as second-class citizens in terms of freedom of choice, political and social power sharing. They are exploited in both physical and

psychological ways because the socio-cultural construction of society is in no way sympathetic and favourable to women. In order to survive in the patricentric society, they are forced to find their own way. In their failure, they become some time neurotic or rather commit suicide.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To analyse the problem of the study psychoanalytic feminist criticism is applied, which will answer the research question dealing with many ugly practices prevalent in Indian society with regards to gender oppression.

The proposed research will be pursued by using the basic methods of literary research such as close reading, interpretation, explication, analysis and evolution. A thorough analysis will also be made of the bibliographical and electronic resources needed for literary research, including reference works, specific glossaries, consultation of catalogues from research libraries, use of databases of literary texts corresponding to different aspects of the research, and periodicals relevant to different areas of this proposed study.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, Indian women are caught in the multi-layered trap of family and society. There is no one consistent pattern for the women to follow in this society. They have to strive hard for equality, dignity and self-respect but finally they lose the battle. In their failure they are left to be alienated and become the victim of mental disorder. No one has time to stop and think that they are an individual, with needs and desires of their own. Indian women struggle all their lives to have a dignified existence and still they forget to advise their daughter to be strong. They also suffer too much from the existential dilemma, they react sometimes violently and sometimes

silently. Violence against women will be end only when instead of a burden they are considered as the exes of family and society.

The study addresses that both genders need to be equally treated because humans, as a species, cannot progress without either of them. If all the women of the country will come together and bring about a feminist revolution, perhaps things would be better for all of us.

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